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Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 8, to read as follows:

a² Any of the previously noted cellulosic fibers or pretreated cellulosic fibers treated with particle binders and/or densification/softness aids known in the art can also be employed in accordance with the present invention. The particle binders serve to attach other materials, such as superabsorbent polymers, to the cellulosic fibers. Cellulosic fibers treated with suitable particle binders and/or densification/softness aids and the process for combining them with cellulose fibers are disclosed in the following U.S. patents and patent applications: (1) Patent No. 5,543,215, entitled "Polymeric Binders for Binding Particles to Fibers"; (2) Patent No. 5,538,783, entitled "Non-Polymeric Organic Binders for Binding Particles to Fibers"; (3) Patent No. 5,300,192, entitled "Wet Laid Fiber Sheet Manufacturing With Reactivable Binders for Binding Particles to Binders;" (4) Patent No. 5,352,480, entitled "Method for Binding Particle to Fibers Using Reactivable Binders"; (5) Patent No. 5,308,896, entitled "Particle Binders for High-Bulk Fibers"; (6) Serial No. 07/931,279, now U.S. Patent No. 5,589,256, filed August 17, 1992, entitled "Particle Binders that Enhance Fiber Densification"; (7) Serial No. 08/107,469, now U.S. Patent No. 5,672,418, filed August 17, 1993, entitled "Particle Binders"; (8) Serial No. 08/108,219, now U.S. Patent No. 5,607,759, filed August 17, 1993, entitled "Particle Binding to Fibers"; (9) Serial No. 08/107,467, now U.S. Patent No. 5,693,411, filed August 17, 1993, entitled "Binders for Binding Water Soluble Particles to Fibers"; (10) Patent No. 5,547,745, entitled "Particle Binders"; (11) Serial No. 08/108,218, now U.S. Patent No. 5,641,561, filed August 17, 1993, entitled "Particle Binding to Fibers"; and (12) Patent No. 5,308,896, entitled "Particle Binders for High-Bulk Fibers," all expressly incorporated herein by reference. One example of a suitable densification/softness aid is a mixture of 70% sorbitol and 30% glycerin. The absorbent is treated with sorbitol and glycerin by spraying the absorbent with the mixture or passing the

LAW OFFICES OF
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS^{PLLC}
1420 Fifth Avenue
Suite 2800
Seattle, Washington 98101
206.682.8100

a² absorbent through a curtain coater, or other means familiar to those skilled in the art of adding a liquid to an absorbent sheet.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page ~~14~~¹⁵, line ~~34~~⁴, to read as follows:

a³ As noted above, the binder utilized in accordance with the present invention can also be a soluble bonding medium that can be incorporated with the pulped cellulosic fibers, either in fiber form, or as particles or granules. If desired, the bonding medium can also be coated onto solvent-insoluble fibers, such as cellulosic fibers, which can then be distributed throughout the matrix of fibers making up each of the strata of the present invention. It is presently preferred that the bonding medium comprise a fiber and be mixed with the components of each stratum prior to the formation of the absorbent. The use of soluble bonding mediums with cellulose fiber webs is disclosed in U. S. patent application Serial No. 08/669,406, now U.S. Patent No. 5,837,627, filed July 3, 1996, entitled "Fibrous Web Having Improved Strength and Method of Making the Same," expressly incorporated herein by reference.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page ~~17~~¹⁸, line ~~34~~⁴, to read as follows:

a⁴ In another aspect, the present invention provides methods for producing a unitary stratified composite. Generally, the unitary stratified composite is formed by forming a first stratum (as described above) on a second stratum (as described above), or the reverse. Intimate connection of the first stratum to the second stratum, and the formation of the transition zone, occurs when the two strata are laid down as described below. The unitary stratified composite of the present invention may be formed by an air-laid process, a wet-laid process, or a foam-formed process. A unitary stratified composite can be produced in accordance with the present invention in a variety of methods including, for example, air-laid or wet-laid web forming techniques known to those of ordinary skill in the pulp processing art. Representative examples of air-laid and wet-laid processes are disclosed in U.S. patent applications: Serial No. 08/337,642, filed

LAW OFFICES OF
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS^{PLLC}
1420 Fifth Avenue
Suite 2800
Seattle, Washington 98101
206.682.8100